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TAGS: [PREF](#) [PREL](#) [TH](#) [LA](#)  
SUBJECT: THAI AGREE TO TAKE BACK HMONG DEPORTEES

REF: A. STATE 13712  
[1](#)B. STATE 13706  
[1](#)C. VIENTIANE 91

Classified By: Ambassador Ralph L. Boyce, reason 1.4 (b) (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: NSC Secretary-General Winai Phattiyakul told Ambassador on January 30 that Thailand would permit the return of the 27 Hmong currently imprisoned in Laos. General Winai reviewed with the Ambassador procedures that the Thai side would find acceptable; all of these appear to us consistent with the proposals already discussed between Department and Embassy Vientiane. General Winai emphasized the importance of resolving this as quietly as possible, and even asked us not/not to discuss this with the Thai MFA, which he warned might interfere and derail the plans. We therefore recommend that the Department hold off making any statement on this case and keep the details of the proposed return close hold. end summary.

[1](#)2. (C) NSC Secretary-General Winai Phattiyakul, following several conversations over several days with the Ambassador, agreed today that the Thai would permit the return of the "27 Hmong minors" in detention in Laos. (The group had been returned to Laos on December 5 without coordination with the Lao government, and were consequently being detained by the Lao as "illegal aliens.") General Winai emphasized that this return should take place quietly, and asked that post not even discuss the procedures with the Thai MFA, who, he warned, might intervene in a way that could block the proposed resolution of the case.

[1](#)3. (C) The plan proposed by NSC is consistent with the procedures that have been discussed by the Department and Embassy Vientiane. NSC understands that the Lao would turn the group over to the US embassy in Vientiane. The embassy would engage a bus to take the young people across the bridge, arranging with the Lao authorities their departure from Laos without emigration formalities (as they have no travel documents). The NSC would have an official meet them at the Thai immigration point; he would facilitate the group's entry into Thailand and travel on to Phetchaboon. (The NSC has confirmed with the local authorities there that the families of the detainees are still in Phetchaboon.) The young people would then be reunited with their families and each family would return to wherever they have been staying in the Phetchaboon area. General Winai says that he needs about three days to get everything in place to receive the group, and he will wait for our confirmation that the Lao will follow through on their previous pledge to turn the group over to the Embassy in Vientiane.

[1](#)4. (C) Comment: This is a breakthrough, and is clearly the best chance we have to resolve the situation of the imprisoned young people. We hope that we can move quickly and quietly to get these young people out of harm's way and returned to their families. The Thai have made a significant accommodation in response to our requests, taking

back a group of illegal immigrants and allowing the Lao government essentially to veto any return of its own citizens. We should meet their offer with an equal willingness to make this plan work smoothly.

BOYCE